

Summary of Catch Shares Briefing for Commercial Sector Interests
July 20, 2009 (3-4:30pm)

Monica Medina, Task Force Chairperson, thanked participants for attending and providing their input on catch shares. She reminded the participants that NOAA is developing a policy, not a regulation, and that catch shares will not be considered a “one size fits all” solution for every fishery. NOAA thinks catch share programs are good tools worth consideration and that any impediments to their consideration need to be remedied.

Ms. Medina summarized the work of the Catch Shares Task Force to date. She described the process by which participants were selected, and stated that the group is not a federal advisory committee – participants are providing their individual thoughts. The current briefings are a way for NOAA to gather information from interested parties as it moves forward. The policy, once issued, will be a draft/interim policy that will go into effect immediately, but will be open for public comment for a minimum of 90 days. Round-table discussions with fishery representatives will likely be reconvened at that point for a second conversation.

Ms. Medina then opened the meeting for questions and comments.

- Several participants stated that they are reassured that NOAA is not planning to begin a new regulatory direction with catch shares, since the 2006 Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) changes have not had time to be fully implemented yet.

- Two participants expressed their views that councils should retain the ability and flexibility to consider processors in catch share programs under the new policy.

- A question was asked about the definition of “catch shares”. NOAA is forming a definition that would be part of the policy, but it would be a high-level definition of the term. Ms. Medina said that the draft definition will be shared with the public for comment.

- Several participants each emphasized the benefits of public participation and buy-in for catch share programs and allocation decisions. Ms. Medina stated that NOAA’s goal is to encourage councils and fishermen to work together, and said that the agency will work on two issues: public education and institutional knowledge at the council level for design/implementation.

- A participant asked how the catch shares policy will affect pending Limited Access Privilege Program (LAPP) guidance, and whether LAPP and catch shares would be rolled into one large guidance document. The two products will be separate but complementary, with the policy focused on principles and the LAPP guidance focused on details of design and implementation.

- A number of participants each stressed that the new policy should recognize the importance of coastal communities and healthy ecosystems. Some suggested relying on the MSA National Standards and outlining those concepts, particularly for communities

and critical habitat, explicitly in the policy so that they are incorporated in decisions from start to finish.

-Participants identified their concerns with catch share processes of initial allocation, reallocation, and monitoring. Several mentioned a lack of information or data gaps in the records. Also raised were questions regarding state involvement and referendums. Ms. Medina said that these were complex issues, and asked participants to contribute any follow up thoughts about what a policy could say that would be helpful in regard to these topics.

-One participant stated that HMS fisheries would not comport well with catch share programs due to the international quotas under which they already operate. Ms. Medina repeated that NOAA will not have a “one size fits all policy,” and understands that each fishery will need to consider whether catch shares are appropriate for their program.

-Several participants each supported transferability between sectors but discouraged NOAA from allowing non-fishing entities to own catch shares. However, permit banks were introduced as an example of a non-fishing entity with goals that could be consistent with the principles NOAA seeks to promote.

-Issues of bycatch and discard were raised, and the needs for comprehensive plans that help limit these problems.

-Some fisheries are more complex to manage through catch share programs than others, such as partially-rationalized fisheries. Ms. Medina stated that by identifying criteria or lessons learned that councils can see where and how other federal catch share programs had been successfully instituted.

-On the topic of the best way to disseminate the draft/interim policy, several participants discouraged publication in the Federal Register, and recommended informal venues such as stakeholder meetings, trade shows and councils.

-Additional comments included that the agency should not mandate catch share programs; should not over-manipulate existing and successful catch share programs; NOAA should ensure reliable and best-available science; and be cautious about any hard and fast sunset rules.

-In reply to what impediments have hindered catch shares, and what things the agency can do that would make it easier for fishermen and councils to adopt catch share programs, one respondent mentioned the fear of the unknown, and the problem of generating equitable allocation were hindrances. Another participant pointed out that we have come a long way since the MSA moratorium on Individual Fishing Quotas and public sentiment is changing very quickly. In closing, one participant reminded everyone that catch share systems are data-hungry, money-hungry and personnel-hungry and the agency will need to provide resources, both in the forms of funding and science, to operate them successfully. Also, transparency will be critical.

Ms. Medina encouraged participants to contact her by email if they had any further thoughts, and the session ended at 4:30pm.

Participants –

NOAA Representatives:

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Monica	Medina	NOAA Special Advisor to the Under Secretary
Jim	Balsiger	NMFS Acting AA
Alan	Risenhoover	NMFS Sustainable Fisheries
Mark	Holliday	NMFS Policy Office
Jessica	Dutton	NMFS Policy Office
Sasha	Pryborowski	NOAA Communications

In Room:

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Boyce	Thorne Miller	Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
Jeff	Pike	Pike Associates
Jim	Gilmore	At-sea Processors Association
Dennis	Phelan	Pacific Seafood Processors Assn.
Shaun	Gehan	Kelley Drye
Margaret	Henderson	National Fisheries Institute
Rick	Marks	Robertson, Monagle & Eastaugh
Justin	LeBlanc	United Catcher Boats

On Phone:

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Jennifer	Austin	NOAA Communications
Scott	Barrows	Hawaii Longline Association
David	Benton	Marine Conservation Alliance
Eric	Brazer	The Hook and Fixed Gear Sectors
Aaron	Dority	Penobscot East Resource Center
Kenny	Down	Freezer Longline Coalitions
Shaun	Gehan	Kelley Drye
Bob	Gill	Catch Shares Task Force
John	Hall	HI Longline Association and Zephyr Fisheries
Bob	Jones	Southeastern Fisheries Association
Pat	Kurkul	NOAA
Glen	Libby	Midcoast Fishermans Association
Jennifer	Litteral	Midcoast Fishermans Association
Steve	Minor	North Pacific Crab Association
Rod	Moore	West Coast Seafood Processors
Steve	Murawski	NOAA Fisheries
Andrianna	Natsoulas	Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
Dennis	O'Hern	Fishing Rights Alliance
John	Pappalardo	NOAA
Maggie	Raymond	Associated Fisheries of ME
Glenn	Reed	Pacific Seafood Processor Association
Curt	Rice	Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
Richard	Ruais	Blue Water Fishermans Association
John	Sackton	Seafood.com
Robert	Spaeth	Southern Offshore Fishing Association
Lori	Swanson	Groundfish Forum
TJ	Tate	Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance